Environment and Climate Change Canada
Environnement et Changement climatique Canada
Canada

MIGRATORY BIRDS REGULATIONS IN CANADA JULY 2018

2018/2019 and 2019/2020 HUNTING SEASONS

Canadian Wildlife Service
Waterfowl Committee

CWS Migratory Birds Regulatory Report Number 51

Cat. N°.: CW69-16/51-2018E-PDF
ISBN: 978-0-660-27034-0

Unless otherwise specified, you may not reproduce materials in this publication, in whole or in part, for the purposes of commercial redistribution without prior written permission from Environment and Climate Change Canada's copyright administrator. To obtain permission to reproduce Government of Canada materials for commercial purposes, apply for Crown Copyright Clearance by contacting:

Environment and Climate Change Canada
Public Inquiries Centre
7th Floor, Fontaine Building
200 Sacré-Coeur Boulevard
Gatineau QC K1A 0H3
Telephone: 819-997-2800
Toll Free: 1-800-668-6767 (in Canada only)
Email: ec.enviroinfo.ec@canada.ca

Cover Illustration: © Environment and Climate Change Canada

© Her Majesty the Queen in Right of Canada, represented by the Minister of Environment and Climate Change, 2018

Aussi disponible en français

For more information on migratory birds, please visit

The Government of Canada's Migratory Birds website:

https://www.canada.ca/en/environment-climate-change/services/birds-canada.html

---

Important Note:

Canadians may be exposed to avian-borne viruses when birdwatching, hunting or handling migratory birds and other wild game. Environment and Climate Change Canada recommends the following website, maintained by the Public Health Agency of Canada, for information on minimizing the risk of exposure: www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/id-mi/index-eng.php

---

Cover Art:

The Canadian Wildlife Habitat Conservation Stamp, entitled Tranquil Waters — Canada Geese, features the Canada Goose. It is a creation of the Canadian wildlife artist Angela Lorenzen of Ontario.

Through a special partnership with Environment and Climate Change Canada, Wildlife Habitat Canada receives the revenues from the sale of the Canadian Wildlife Habitat Conservation Stamp, purchased primarily by waterfowl hunters to validate their Migratory Game Bird Hunting Permits. The conservation stamp is also sold to stamp and print collectors and those interested in contributing to habitat conservation. In 2016–2017, Wildlife Habitat Canada provided 34 grants to 30 organizations, totalling approximately $1.4 million. This in turn helped leverage an additional $5.34 million in partner funding for conservation projects, resulting in the conservation, restoration and enhancement of more than 35 179 acres of wildlife habitat across Canada (www.whc.org).

For more information on Wildlife Habitat Canada or the conservation stamp and print program, please call Wildlife Habitat Canada at 613-722-2090 (in the Ottawa region) or toll-free at 1-800-669-7919, or consult at www.whc.org.

Migratory Birds Regulations in Canada
July 2018

2018/2019 and 2019/2020 Hunting Seasons

Canadian Wildlife Service Waterfowl Committee

CWS Migratory Birds Regulatory Report Number 51

Author:
This report was prepared by the Canadian Wildlife Service Waterfowl Committee, and edited by Antoine Asselin-Nguyen and Renée Bergeron of the Wildlife Management and Regulatory Affairs Division of Environment and Climate Change Canada's Canadian Wildlife Service.

Recommended citation for this report:
Canadian Wildlife Service Waterfowl Committee. 2018. *Migratory Birds Regulations in Canada, July 2018. 2018/2019 and 2019/2020 Hunting Seasons.* CWS Migratory Birds Regulatory Report Number 51. Environment and Climate Change Canada, Ottawa.

Comments:
Comments regarding the regulation-setting process or other concerns relating to migratory birds should be sent to the Canadian Wildlife Service, Wildlife Management and Regulatory Affairs Division:

Director, Wildlife Management and Regulatory Affairs Division
Canadian Wildlife Service
Environment and Climate Change Canada
Ottawa ON K1A 0H3
Email: ec.scf-oismigqibiers-cws-migqamebirds.ec@canada.ca

Region-specific comments should be sent to the appropriate Regional Director, Stewardship and Regional Operations, Canadian Wildlife Service, at the following postal addresses:

Atlantic Region: 17 Waterfowl Lane, P.O. Box 6227, Sackville NB E4L 1G6
Quebec Region: 801-1550 d'Estimauville Avenue, Québec QC G1J 0C3
Ontario Region: 4905 Dufferin Street, Toronto ON M3H 5T4
Prairie Region: 9250 49th Street NW, 2nd Floor, Edmonton AB T6B 1K5
Northern Region: 5019 52nd Street, P.O. Box 2310, Yellowknife NT X1A 2P7
Pacific Region: RR1, 5421 Robertson Road, Delta BC V4K 3N2

This report may be downloaded from the following website:
https://www.canada.ca/en/environment-climate-change/services/migratory-game-bird-hunting/consultation-process-regulations/report-series.html

TABLE OF CONTENTS

BACKGROUND 1

SCHEDULE FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF HUNTING REGULATIONS WITHIN EACH REGULATORY CYCLE 1

AMERICAN BLACK DUCK INTERNATIONAL HARVEST STRATEGY 2

2017 FALL ECCC REGIONAL STAKEHOLDER MEETINGS REGARDING THE HUNTING REGULATIONS FOR THE 2018/2019 AND 2019/2020 SEASONS 2

SUMMARY OF THE COMMENTS RECEIVED DURING PUBLIC CONSULTATIONS HELD IN FEBRUARY 2018 REGARDING THE HUNTING REGULATIONS FOR THE 2018/2019 AND 2019/2020 SEASONS 3

MIGRATORY GAME BIRDS HUNTING REGULATIONS FOR THE 2018/2019 AND 2019/2020 SEASONS (INCLUDING SPECIAL CONSERVATION MEASURES FOR OVERABUNDANT SPECIES) 5

Newfoundland and Labrador 5
Prince Edward Island 6
Nova Scotia 6
New Brunswick 6
Quebec 6
Ontario 7
Manitoba 8
Saskatchewan 8
Alberta 8
British Columbia 8
Yukon Territory 9
Northwest Territories 10
Nunavut 10
Administrative amendments 10

STATUS UPDATE ON MODERNIZATION OF THE *MIGRATORY BIRDS REGULATIONS* 10

PLEASE REPORT BIRD BANDS 10

THE GOVERNMENT OF CANADA IS ALLOWING THE TEMPORARY POSSESSION OF DEAD MIGRATORY BIRDS 10

NEW ONLINE E-PERMITTING SYSTEM – AN EASY WAY TO PURCHASE THE MIGRATORY GAME BIRD HUNTING PERMIT 11

APPENDIX: 2018/2019 MIGRATORY BIRDS HUNTING REGULATIONS SUMMARIES BY PROVINCE AND TERRITORY 12

Background

Environment and Climate Change Canada (ECCC) is responsible for the conservation of migratory birds in Canada and the management of the sustainable hunting of these birds. The hunting regulations for migratory game birds are reviewed and amended biennially by ECCC, with input from provinces and territories, as well as from various other stakeholders. However, the population status of migratory game birds is assessed on an annual basis to ensure that the regulations are appropriate, and amendments can be made between review periods, if necessary, for conservation reasons.

As part of the regulatory process to amend the hunting regulations, the ECCC's Canadian Wildlife Service (CWS) produces a series of three regulatory reports:

The first report, *Population Status of Migratory Game Birds in Canada*, contains population and other biological information on migratory game birds and thus provides the scientific basis for informing management decisions that ensure the long-term sustainability of their population. Every two years, ECCC reviews hunting regulations and publishes the report on the population status of migratory game birds in Canada. However, CWS analyzes population trends on a yearly basis to evaluate the status of migratory game bird populations.

The second report, *Proposals to Amend the Canadian Migratory Birds Regulations*, outlines the proposed changes to the hunting regulations for the next two hunting seasons, as well as proposals to amend the overabundant species regulations and other proposed amendments to the *Migratory Birds Regulations*. Proposals for hunting regulations are developed in accordance with the Objectives and Guidelines for the Establishment of National Regulations for Migratory Game Bird Hunting (www.canada.ca/en/environment-climate-change/services/migratory-game-bird-hunting/consultation-process-regulations/establishing-national-objectives-guidelines.html). This report is published every second year, concurrently with the revision of hunting regulations.

The third report, *Migratory Birds Regulations in Canada*, summarizes the hunting regulations that were approved for the next two hunting seasons. This report is published every second year, concurrently with the revision of hunting regulations.

The three reports are distributed to organizations and individuals with an interest in migratory bird conservation, to provide an opportunity for input on the development of hunting regulations in Canada. They are also available on the Government of Canada's website: www.canada.ca/en/environment-climate-change/services/migratory-game-bird-hunting/consultation-process-regulations/report-series.html.

The process for developing regulations in Canada requires that any changes be in the form of final proposals by late February during years of regulatory changes. That means that regulations must be set without knowing about the breeding conditions and production forecasts of the coming year. This does not usually present difficulties because the hunting regulations are based on trends over several years, but in some cases the results from recent harvest surveys or breeding population surveys conducted in May and June will indicate that changes in the national approach are needed to ensure the conservation of migratory game birds. In this case, ECCC will process a regulatory amendment and issue a bulletin updating these regulations.

Regulatory proposals described in the current document will start in September 2018 and remain in effect through winter/spring 2020 inclusively. Special conservation measures are also established for overabundant geese in spring 2019 and spring 2020.

Schedule for the Development of Hunting Regulations within each Regulatory Cycle

The schedule for the development of hunting regulations is based on the requirement to have the hunting regulations made into law by June:

- September through November – The *Population Status of Migratory Game Birds in Canada* report, containing biological information on migratory game birds, is developed. In January, it is distributed and posted on the Government of Canada's website.
- October and November – CWS regional offices develop proposals for hunting regulations in consultation with the provinces and territories and interested stakeholders.
- January – The *Proposals to Amend the Canadian Migratory Birds Regulations* report containing the regulation proposals is posted on the Government of Canada's website and distributed to allow for public, inter-regional and international consultation.
- June – Hunting regulations become law.
- July – The *Migratory Birds Regulations in Canada* report, containing the approved hunting regulations, is distributed and posted on the Government of Canada's website. The migratory game bird hunting regulation summaries are available on the Government of Canada's website.

- August – Hunting regulation summaries are available with the Migratory Game Bird Hunting Permits at Canada Post outlets and on the Government of Canada's website.

Migratory game bird hunters are made aware of the migratory game bird hunting regulations at the same time they receive information on season dates and bag and possession limits, when they purchase their hunting permit.

Note to American Readers

The cycle of regulation development in Canada meets the requirements of the Canadian regulatory process; proposals for hunting regulations must be finalized no later than the end of February. Canadian representatives at the summer Flyway Council meetings and other hearings are not reporting on what is being considered, but on what has been passed into law.

American Black Duck International Harvest Strategy

The American Black Duck International Harvest Strategy was adopted in 2012 by the CWS and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS). The objectives of the Strategy, based on the principles of adaptive harvest management, are to:

- maintain a Black Duck population that provides consumptive and non-consumptive use commensurate with habitat carrying capacity;
- maintain societal values associated with the hunting tradition; and
- maintain equitable access to the Black Duck resource.

As such, the Strategy is designed to identify appropriate Black Duck harvest levels in Canada and the U.S. based on the size of the breeding population of Black Ducks and sympatric Mallards while maintaining equity in Black Duck harvests between the two countries. However, recognizing incomplete control of harvest through regulations, it allows the realized harvest in either country to vary between 40% and 60% of the annual continental harvest.

The Strategy, used to determine the appropriate Black Duck harvest regulations, was first implemented in 2013–2014. It consists of four pre-defined regulatory packages in Canada and three in the United States. Country-specific harvest opportunities are determined from a set of expected harvest rate distributions defined as regulatory alternatives. Canada developed four regulatory packages (liberal, moderate, restrictive and closed) with the Canadian moderate alternative defined as the 1997 to 2010 mean harvest rate (the reference package). The Canadian packages are as follows:

- Liberal: 30% increase in harvest rate over the 1997–2010 mean harvest rate;
- Moderate: 1997–2010 mean harvest rate (3.5% per year [mean harvest rate for adult males]);
- Restrictive: 30% decrease in harvest rate below the 1997–2010 mean harvest rate; and
- Closed: no Black Duck harvest allowed.

The optimal Canadian policy recommendation for the 2018–2019 hunting season is the liberal regulatory package. This recommendation is based on long-term trends in Black Duck and Mallard breeding populations in eastern Canada as well as the estimated effects of hunting on Black Duck populations. Mallards are included in the Strategy because this species hybridizes and competes with Black Ducks on the breeding grounds and may therefore negatively affect the Black Duck population. According to data collected by the CWS and USFWS, the current level of harvest has only a low effect on population levels. The liberal package is therefore the optimal alternative.

Each regulatory package, however, must be implemented for at least two years before changes to the regulatory package will be considered, due to variability in annual harvest rates. In the interim, CWS will continue to monitor harvest rate in addition to the breeding population to ensure that the Strategy continues to meet the objectives stated above.

2017 Fall ECCC Regional Stakeholder Meetings Regarding the Hunting Regulations for the 2018/2019 and 2019/2020 Seasons

In the fall of 2017, biologists from ECCC met with their provincial and territorial counterparts, as well as other stakeholders, in technical committees to discuss new information on the status of migratory game bird populations and how it compares to annual trends. These regional technical committees used survey information from national and international bird population surveys, species-specific studies, and information received from migratory game bird hunters and non-government organizations to identify concerns with population levels of migratory game bird species. In order to address these concerns and ensure a sustainable harvest for migratory game birds, hunting season dates, daily bag limits, possession limits, and hunting zones require adjustment for certain species for the 2018-2019 and 2019-2020 hunting seasons.

Summary of the Comments Received During Public Consultations Held in February 2018 Regarding the Hunting Regulations for the 2018/2019 and 2019/2020 Seasons

During the public consultation held from January 27 to February 26, 2018, ECCC received several comments which were generally positive and supportive of the proposed changes for the next two hunting seasons. The following comments were received:

Country-wide

One large hunter organization expressed their support for the proposed changes across the country. They also offered some suggestions for the next round of amendments to the regulations. Those suggestions will be carefully examined and considered by ECCC, and discussed at the next regional waterfowl stakeholder meetings.

Two animal rights non-governmental organizations (NGOs) expressed in a common letter an opposition to overabundant seasons. They also want to remove the "overabundant" classification designation for Greater and Lesser Snow Goose and Ross's Goose, as well as dismantle the special conservation measures for all of these species. The main concerns expressed by these NGOs are summarized below along with ECCC CWS' responses to these concerns.

– The determination of "overabundance" is arbitrary

The overabundance designation is set in law. Section 23.1 of the *Migratory Birds Regulations* states: "The holder of a migratory game bird hunting permit may, in accordance with subsection (3), kill birds of a species of migratory game bird that, as a result of the rate of increase of the population of that species or its overabundance, is injurious to or threatens agricultural, environmental or other similar interests." Greater Snow Goose, Lesser Snow Goose and Ross's Goose all meet the criteria for designation as overabundant species due to sustained increases in their abundance and concerns about their impacts on some arctic habitats and on agricultural interests. Recent studies have also shown that large Snow Goose populations can have negative impacts on other species which breed in the same areas, particularly shorebirds. Overabundance regulations have been in place since 1999 for Greater Snow Goose and Midcontinent Lesser Snow Goose; and since 2014 for Ross's Goose and Western Arctic Snow Goose; to allow increased harvest in Canada.

– The Greater and Lesser Snow Goose and Ross's Goose population management strategies have not achieved the stated goals of reducing population sizes

Management of overabundant species is a science-based process that relies on the most up-to-date information. Increases in harvest levels following enactment of these regulations has been well documented and in some cases appears to have had a significant impact on the growth of the population. A case in point is the Greater Snow Goose which, since the US joined in conservation efforts with a Conservation Order in 2009, saw a significant increase in harvest rates and, as a result, the growth of the Greater Snow Goose population appears to have been curtailed, and is now fairly stable at between 800,000 and 1 million birds. The midcontinent population of Lesser Snow Goose is the largest population of geese in the world, and though it has not declined noticeably since overabundance regulations began, harvest has increased and the rate of population growth has declined over the past two decades. There are also signs that density-dependent processes have led to reduced productivity of this population, and this has likely contributed to declining population growth rate. Although the midcontinent population of Lesser Snow Goose may be too large to be controlled only through hunting, there are over 12 million of them compared to only 1-2.5 million each of Ross's Goose, Western Arctic Snow Goose, and Greater Snow Goose.

In the case of Greater Snow Goose, ECCC has learned that the time to attempt population management is when overabundant populations are still of "manageable size." In the case of Midcontinent Lesser Snow Goose, continued harvest coupled with declining production of gosling could eventually induce population decline. Regulations to address overabundance of Ross's Goose and Western Arctic Snow Goose have only been in place for a few years in Canada, and there have been additional efforts to increase harvest of these populations in the US. It is too early to know if these efforts have been successful in reducing growth rates of these populations. These results indicate that special conservation measures for overabundant geese can be effective when applied to populations that are not too large.

There remain concerns about potential negative impacts of ever-increasing populations of these arctic-nesting species on arctic and sub-arctic habitats, on other species that use similar habitats, and on agricultural interests in Canada. In the meantime, research is continuing into the quality and availability of goose habitat in arctic Canada, and the potential

impacts of large populations of arctic geese on their habitats and on species breeding on the same breeding grounds. Results from such studies will be integrated into a science-based management decision framework to determine the most appropriate actions in the future.

Newfoundland

One hunter suggested an earlier November opening season date for sea duck hunts on the northeast coast, with no extension at the end of the season, as the earlier opening would allow more hunting opportunities before the bays freeze and harsh winter weather arrives. Most small communities have adjacent bays that freeze up early in November, thus limiting access for hunters to the outside waters where sea ducks migrate from the north. ECCC conducted a hunter opinion survey in 2010, and one of the questions concerned the opening dates for duck hunting on the northeast coast. The majority of hunters in the northeast coast area that participated in the survey were not supportive of a shift to earlier season dates.

Nova Scotia

Hunters in Nova Scotia suggested extending the end of the duck season by two weeks instead of the proposed two week extension at the beginning, as there is little waterfowl hunting activity until at least the end of October into November, when large numbers of birds are predominantly found.

The American Black Duck International Harvest Strategy was adopted in July 2012 by ECCC and the US Fish and Wildlife Service. The strategy was designed to identify appropriate harvest levels in Canada and the US. The harvest strategy was first implemented in 2013-2014 and consists of pre-defined regulatory packages in Canada and the US. Country-specific harvest opportunity (season length and daily bag limits) is determined from an expected harvest rate distribution defined as regulatory alternatives. Canada developed four regulatory packages (liberal, moderate, restrictive and closed). The harvest strategy is re-evaluated every year based on the new information collected over the year either through surveys or harvest data. ECCC recognizes that some hunters would like to see changes in the season dates and daily bag limits to accommodate local preferences. However, a few years may be required before the impacts of any new daily bag limit and season date combinations on local Black duck population can be measured. Once sufficient information is collected, ECCC will re-evaluate the regulatory packages that are contained in the strategy and will submit any modifications for consultations.

Ontario

A large hunting organization in Ontario suggested future discussions with ECCC regarding the possibility of opening a Sandhill Crane hunt in parts of Ontario, as well as the establishment of a Mourning Dove season in the Northern District in areas where birds are abundant, such as the lesser clay belt. Those suggestions will be discussed at the next Ontario waterfowl stakeholder meetings.

In Ontario, duck hunters expressed support for the increased daily bag limits and additional hunting days for American Black Duck. They also suggested that the woodcock season should open earlier, on the same day as that for snipe. With regard to Snow Goose harvest, there has been some suggestion to open up seasons across southern and eastern Ontario, and not restrict it to only WMU 65, as populations are considered overabundant and are now more prevalent in the spring and fall.

During the 2016 hunting regulations meeting with stakeholders, which included this hunting association, it was determined that ECCC would examine the hunting season opening dates for woodcock in relation to Ruffed Grouse hunting seasons in Ontario. There was consensus among stakeholders that an effort would be made to simplify the hunting regulations for these species for both hunters and enforcement, given that many hunters tend to hunt both at the same time. During the 2017 meeting, the only concern raised by this association was over the possible loss of hunting days in the Hudson-James Bay District, but this concern was shown to be unsubstantiated because of the low abundance and distribution of woodcock in this area. As such, the current proposal represents consensus among stakeholders. In 2018, ECCC will assess the current Snow Goose hunting seasons in Ontario to determine possible changes to the hunting regulations in the future. Outcomes from this assessment will be discussed among stakeholders at the 2018 hunting regulations meeting.

British Columbia

A hunting association and individual hunters in BC proposed an increase to the daily bag and possession limits for Canada Geese in Provincial Management Units 1-1, 1-2, and 1-4 to 1-7 within Migratory Bird Hunting Zone 1, as geese have become a nuisance to the point of destroying the environment as well as farmers' fields. ECCC will assess the effect of such a proposal and conduct proper public consultations. It will be considered during the next regulatory cycle planned for fall 2019.

Regarding the new hunting season for Eurasian Collared-Dove in BC, comments received from hunters were positive and supported the new hunt for this species. They also suggested extending the hunting season to all districts (8 districts) in BC and not restricting it to only Districts 3, 4 and 8, as it is an invasive species throughout the province. ECCC could not assess the effects of a broader Eurasian Collared-Dove season in BC without engaging in an assessment of seasons for Mourning Dove. This proposal will be revisited during the next regulatory cycle.

Hunters provided comments on Black Brant regulation proposals in BC. Some would like to see the season lengths increased. Based on the relatively small number of hunting areas, coupled with the relatively small groups of regular dedicated hunters and low hunter recruitment, extending the hunting season would pose marginal added pressure on the current stocks going forward. ECCC believes that implementing a season extension at the same time as increasing the daily bag limit would increase pressure on the recovery of the local Brant population to historic levels. An informal hunter survey conducted by BC in 2017 indicated that the majority of Brant hunters preferred a larger daily bag limit over a longer season.

Nunavut and the Northwest Territories

Given the frequency at which wildlife management boards meet, it was not possible to consult with the Nunavut Wildlife Management Board to discuss the proposed changes increasing the possession limit for non-residents of Canada for ducks, Canada and Cackling Goose, Brant, White-fronted Goose, and snipe. Therefore, the proposed changes are not being implemented at this time, pending further consultations with the board.

Two Indigenous communities in the Northwest Territories expressed opposition to the proposed changes increasing the possession limit of non-residents of Canada for ducks, Canada and Cackling Goose, and Brant. Therefore, the proposed changes are not being implemented at this time, until the concerns of the communities are addressed.

Migratory Game Birds Hunting Regulations for the 2018/2019 and 2019/2020 Seasons (including special conservation measures for overabundant species)

CWS has jointly developed the hunting regulation amendments presented here in consultation with the provinces and territories, other countries such as the U.S., and a range of other interested stakeholders, including hunter organizations, Indigenous Peoples of Canada and conservation groups. They were approved by Cabinet and published in the *Canada Gazette*, Part II, on June 13, 2018.

The following summarizes the hunting regulations amendments by province and territory during this regulatory cycle. The complete set of regulations that will be in effect in fall 2018 and winter/spring 2019 are contained in the Appendix (Migratory Birds Hunting Regulations Summaries) and are posted on the Government of Canada's website: https://www.canada.ca/en/environment-climate-change/services/migratory-game-bird-hunting/regulations-provincial-territorial-summaries.html

Newfoundland and Labrador

ESTABLISHED A NEW HUNTING ZONE FOR SEA DUCKS

A new sea duck zone has been created on the northern tip and western side of the Northern Peninsula of Newfoundland. The season opens on November 1 and closes on February 14. This accommodates long standing requests from hunters for more hunting opportunity for migrant Common Eider breeding in northern Newfoundland and the southern coastal areas of Labrador, whose population appears to be increasing. This measure also allows hunters to hunt prior to the formation of ice in the Strait of Belle Isle. A corresponding change has also been made to the opening and closing season dates for the Southern Labrador Zone from November 1 to February 14.

INCREASED DAILY BAG LIMIT FOR AMERICAN BLACK DUCK

The American Black Duck International Harvest Strategy continues to be implemented in Newfoundland. A liberal regime is in effect for the 2018–2019 hunting season: 6 American Black Ducks (formerly 4) are allowed in the daily bag for the first part of the hunting season. Due to an increase in harvest susceptibility later in the season, the daily bag limit is restricted to 4 American Black Ducks for the last 30 days of the season. No changes were made to American Black Duck bag limits or season dates in Labrador. By default, the liberal regulatory package will also be implemented for the 2019–2020 American Black Duck hunting season in Newfoundland.

Measures similar to those implemented in Newfoundland are also implemented for New Brunswick, Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island.

Prince Edward Island

INCREASED DAILY BAG LIMIT FOR AMERICAN BLACK DUCK

The American Black Duck International Harvest Strategy continues to be implemented in Prince Edward Island. A liberal regime is in effect for the 2018–2019 hunting season: 6 American Black Ducks (formerly 4) are allowed in the daily bag for the first part of the hunting season. Due to an increase in harvest susceptibility later in the season, the daily bag limit is restricted to 4 American Black Duck / Mallard hybrids or 4 American Black Ducks for the last 31 days of the season. The liberal regulatory package will also be implemented for the 2019–2020 American Black Duck hunting season in Prince Edward Island.

Similar measures are also implemented in Newfoundland, New Brunswick and Nova Scotia.

Nova Scotia

INCREASED DAILY BAG LIMIT FOR AMERICAN BLACK DUCK

The American Black Duck International Harvest Strategy continues to be implemented in Nova Scotia. A liberal regime is in effect for the 2018–2019 hunting season. In addition: 6 American Black Ducks (formerly 4) are allowed in the daily bag for the first part of the hunting season. Due to an increase in harvest susceptibility later in the season, the daily bag limit is restricted to 4 American Black Ducks for the last 38 days of the season in Zone No. 1, and the last 39 days of the season in Zone No. 2 and Zone No. 3. The liberal regulatory package will also be implemented for the 2019–2020 American Black Duck hunting season in Nova Scotia.

Similar measures are also implemented for Newfoundland, New Brunswick and Prince Edward Island.

INCREASED HUNTING SEASON LENGTH FOR DUCKS

The length of the season has been increased for ducks (other than Harlequin Duck, Common and Red-breasted Merganser, Long-tailed Duck, eiders, scoters, goldeneyes and Bufflehead) in Zone No. 1 from October 1 to January 7 (formerly October 1 to December 31), and for Zone No. 2 and Zone No. 3 from October 8 to January 15 (formerly October 22 to January 15). The season length for Common and Red-breasted Merganser, Long-tailed Duck, eiders, scoters, goldeneyes and Bufflehead has been increased in Zone No. 1 from October 1 to January 7 (formerly October 1 to December 31). This measure provides more hunting opportunities.

New Brunswick

INCREASED DAILY BAG LIMIT FOR AMERICAN BLACK DUCK

The American Black Duck International Harvest Strategy continues to be implemented in New Brunswick. A liberal regime is in effect for the 2018–2019 hunting season. In addition: 6 American Black Ducks (formerly 3) are allowed in the daily bag for the first part of the hunting season. Due to an increase in harvest susceptibility later in the season, the daily bag limit is restricted to 4 American Black Ducks for the last 31 days of the season. The liberal regulatory package will also be implemented for the 2019–2020 American Black Duck hunting season in New Brunswick.

Similar measures are also implemented for Newfoundland, Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island.

INCREASED HUNTING SEASON LENGTH FOR DUCKS AND SNIPE

The season length has been increased for ducks (other than Harlequin Duck, Common and Red-breasted Merganser, Long-tailed Duck, eiders, scoters, goldeneyes and Bufflehead) and snipe in Zone No. 1 from October 15 to January 14 (formerly October 15 to January 4) and in Zone No. 2 from October 1 to December 31 (formerly October 1 to December 18). This measure provides more hunting opportunities.

Quebec

INCREASED DAILY BAG LIMIT FOR AMERICAN BLACK DUCK

The American Black Duck International Harvest Strategy continues to be implemented in Quebec. A liberal regime is in effect for the 2018–2019 hunting season: 6 American Black Ducks are allowed in the daily bag for all hunting districts in Quebec except a zone in District F, south of Route 148 and west of Highway 15, where the daily bag is 2 American Black Ducks. The liberal regulatory package will also be implemented for the 2019–2020 Black Duck hunting season in Quebec.

INCREASED OPPORTUNITY TO HARVEST SNOW GEESE DURING THE SPECIAL CONSERVATION SEASON IN SPRING IN A PORTION OF THE MONTMAGNY–CAP SAINT-IGNACE HUNTING EXCLUSION AREA IN DISTRICT F

The harvest of Snow Geese is allowed during the special conservation season in spring in a portion of the Montmagny–Cap Saint-Ignace spring harvest exclusion area in District F. Therefore, hunting is allowed in lot number 2 611 982 of the cadastre of Quebec. This measure provides additional

opportunity to manage this overabundant species and contributes, through hunting, to reducing the size of the population.

INCREASED AND COMBINED SEASON LENGTH FOR EIDERS AND LONG-TAILED DUCK IN A PORTION OF DISTRICT B

The season length is increased and combined for eiders and Long-tailed Duck in district B along the North Shore west of the Natashquan River. The hunting season for both species, eiders and Long-tailed Duck, is now from October 1 to October 24 and from November 15 to February 5. (The open season for eiders had been from October 1 to October 24 only, and the open season for Long-tailed Duck had been from November 15 to February 5 only).

There is no conservation concern, and this amendment corrects a previous error and addresses hunters' requests to provide more hunting opportunities.

CLARIFIED THE REGULATIONS AND CORRECTED ERRORS

– Addition of "cadastre of Quebec"

The Regulations have been clarified by adding *"cadastre of Quebec"* after the lot number, in footnote b of Table I.2 (Schedule I, Part V).

– Coordinate changes

The battery #5's coordinates in the technical description of the Lac Saint-Pierre (Nicolet) no-hunting zone in Schedule I, Part V, subsection 3(e) have been corrected. The coordinates now read *"46°13'31"N and 72°40'16"W"* (formerly *"46°13'30"N and 72°40'5"W"*).

– Combination of technical descriptions for two adjacent "no-hunting zones"

The technical descriptions of Schedule I Part V subsections 3(a) "*Cap-Tourmente (Water)*" and section 3(d) "*Cap-Tourmente (Ground)*" no-hunting zones have been combined into a single one called "*Cap-Tourmente.*" This merger is intended to clarify the Regulations as both former technical descriptions showed some degree of overlap and there was no point in keeping them separated.

Ontario

INCREASED DAILY BAG LIMIT FOR AMERICAN BLACK DUCK

The American Black Duck International Harvest Strategy continues to be implemented in Ontario. A liberal regime is in effect for the 2018–2019 hunting season: 4 American Black Ducks are allowed in the daily bag in the Hudson-James Bay District (formerly 2), Northern District (formerly 2) and Central District (formerly 1) and 2 American Black Ducks are allowed in the daily bag for the Southern District (formerly 1). In addition, the number of hunting days in the Southern District has been increased to 107 days (formerly 90 days). The liberal regulatory package will also be implemented for the 2019–2020 hunting season in Ontario.

INCREASED SEASON LENGTH FOR MOURNING DOVE IN THE CENTRAL AND SOUTHERN DISTRICTS

The season length has been increased for Mourning Dove in the Central and Southern Districts to 91 days (only districts where hunting of doves is allowed; formerly 70 days). A fixed opening date of September 1 and a fixed closing date of November 30 is now implemented in both districts (formerly September 5 to November 13 in the Central District and September 7 to November 15 in the Southern District). This change is similar to the prescribed standard regulatory package for the Eastern Management Unit from the Mourning Dove Harvest Strategy.

INCREASED HARVEST OF TEMPERATE-BREEDING CANADA GEESE POPULATION

– Shifted season dates for Canada Goose hunting in the Central District

The season dates have been shifted in the Central District from the former opening date of the first Tuesday after Labour Day. The opening date is now September 1, and the closing date has been fixed to December 16 (maintaining a 107 day season). This change is targeted at trying to increase the harvest of Temperate-Breeding Canada Goose in this area to address the increase in human-goose conflicts. In addition, this proposal standardizes Canada Goose hunting season dates among the Hudson-James Bay, Northern, and Central Districts, thereby simplifying the Regulations for hunters.

– Increased the daily bag limit for Canada Geese and Cackling Geese during the early goose season in select Wildlife Management Units (WMUs) in the Northern District

The daily bag limit has been increased for Canada Geese and Cackling Geese from 5 to 10 during the early Canada Goose season (September 1 to 9) in WMUs 8, 10, 13, 37, 39 and 41 in the Northern District. Local temperate breeding Canada Goose populations are growing in these areas and resulting in local human-goose conflicts. This measure helps to mitigate these issues.

SYNCHRONIZED AMERICAN WOODCOCK AND RUFFED GROUSE OPEN SEASON DATES IN ALL HUNTING DISTRICTS

The opening season dates for American Woodcock have been aligned with those for Ruffed Grouse in all hunting districts in the province. For the Hudson-James Bay, Northern, and Central Districts this date has been fixed to September 15 while the opening date for the Southern District is either September 15 or September 25 depending on the Wildlife Management Unit. This measure has been adopted to simplify the hunting regulations for both of these species, which are often hunted at the same time across the province, for the benefit of hunters.

CLARIFIED AGGREGATE DAILY BAG LIMITS AND POSSESSION LIMITS FOR WOODCOCK, COOT, SNIPE, ROSS'S GOOSE, AND OTHER GEESE

The daily bag and possession limits have been clarified for aggregated marsh game birds and "other geese." The daily bag and possession limits for coot (formerly aggregated with woodcock) have been aggregated with other marsh game birds, including gallinule, and snipe has been removed from this grouping. Furthermore, Ross's Goose has been aggregated with the Snow Goose daily bag and possession limits. Lastly, White-fronted Goose and Brant have been changed to "other Geese" to be consistent with daily bag and possession limits in other provinces (e.g., Quebec, New Brunswick).

Manitoba

EXTENDED HUNTING SEASON LENGTH IN GAME BIRD HUNTING ZONES 3 AND 4

The hunting season length has been increased for ducks, geese, the Sandhill Cranes, woodcock, snipe, and coot in Game Bird Hunting Zones 3 and 4 for residents and non-residents. The season now closes on December 6 instead of November 30. In recent years, late freeze-ups and increasing artificial water sources have held large numbers of ducks and geese in parts of southern Manitoba into December, prompting requests from hunters to extend the season. The increase in harvest of migratory birds is expected to be negligible, but will be monitored using existing harvest survey programs and banding data for some species of ducks and geese.

ESTABLISHED A SPRING SEASON (EARLY MARCH) FOR TEMPERATE-BREEDING CANADA GEESE AND CACKLING GEESE

A hunting season has been established for Canada and Cackling Geese for residents of Canada, from March 1-10 in Game Bird Hunting Zones 3 and 4. Other jurisdictions (e.g., Ontario) have introduced March seasons to increase harvest pressure on temperate-breeding Canada Geese, while providing additional hunting opportunity. Recently, Manitoba has experienced early spring melts and geese (thought to be mainly temperate-breeding Canada Geese) have arrived in southern Manitoba in late February and early March. All populations of Canada and Cackling Geese that migrate through Manitoba are banded annually for harvest management purposes, and while harvest during this period is anticipated to be small in most years, any contributions to annual harvest rates during this season will be monitored using band recovery data.

Saskatchewan

EXTENDED FALCONRY SEASON THROUGHOUT THE PROVINCE

The falconry season (September 1 to December 16) has been extended throughout the province (formerly only opened in the southern part of Saskatchewan). This measure provides additional opportunity for hunters.

Alberta

No regulatory changes have been made for the 2018/2019 and 2019/2020 hunting seasons.

British Columbia

INCREASED DAILY BAG AND POSSESSION LIMITS FOR SNOW GEESE

The daily bag and possession limits have increased for Snow Geese within Migratory Bird Hunting Zone 2. Daily bag limits increased from 10 to 15 and possession limits increased from 30 to 45 in Provincial Management Units 2-4 and 2-5 only; and daily bag limits increase from 5 to 10 and possession limits increase from 15 to 30 in Provincial Management Units 2-2, 2-3, and 2-6 to 2-19.

Snow Goose populations have increased and this has both economic and safety implications. This leads to potential conflicts with aviation operations at the Vancouver International Airport (YVR), perennial crop (hay and pasture) damage, nuisance issues in nearby urban areas, and ecological damage to the bulrush marshes on the Fraser River Delta. The population goal for the Fraser-Skagit Snow Goose population of 50,000–70,000 birds was set to maintain a sustainable population of Snow Goose while minimizing economic, nuisance, and safety concerns. The Fraser-Skagit harvest strategy calls for an increase in harvest in response to the last population estimate of 108,000 birds to bring the population back to the established sustainable population goal and

address nuisance and safety issues. Increasing the daily bag and possession limits for Snow Goose provides additional opportunities to manage this species and contributes to reducing the growth and size of its populations through hunting.

INCREASED DAILY BAG AND POSSESSION LIMITS FOR BRANT

The daily bag limit for Brant has been increased from 2 to 3, and the possession limit has been increased from 6 to 9 in Provincial Management Unit 2-4. This accommodates requests from hunters.

In British Columbia, hunting of Brant is not allowed except for a restrictive late hunting season set from March 1 to 10 in Provincial Management Unit 2-4 in the Fraser River Delta. The March season was established in 1977 to switch harvest from the local wintering population to the much larger Brant population wintering south of British Columbia. The goal of the March season was to help re-build the Fraser River Delta population to its historic levels of 3,500 wintering birds by reducing harvest on wintering birds. The 2016–2017 mid-winter index of the Fraser River Delta was 3,166 birds, below the regional wintering population goal of 3,500.

The 2016–2017 Pacific Flyway mid-winter index for Black Brant was 155,720, and the U.S. sports harvest for Pacific Brant in 2016–2017 was 8,097 birds in CA, OR, WA and AK (USFWS HIP estimate). The 2016–2017 sports harvest for the Fraser River Delta was estimated at roughly 200 birds and has ranged from 50 to 250 birds between 1990 and 2017. The BC harvest represents 0.1% of the Mid-winter Population Index and 2.5% of the Pacific Flyway sports harvest.

Over the last several years, the Canadian Wildlife Service has received requests from BC Brant hunters to increase the bag limit of Brant in the Fraser River Delta in response to overall high populations of Brant in the Pacific Flyway. The current BC harvest is low compared to the rest of the Pacific Flyway states and low compared to recent wintering population estimates.

The measure increases hunting opportunity while having negligible effects at the population level. There are no anticipated conservation concerns associated with this proposed change.

ESTABLISHED A HUNTING SEASON FOR EURASIAN COLLARED-DOVES

A hunting season for Eurasian Collared-Doves (*Streptopelia decaocto*) has been established in the Migratory Bird Hunting Zones currently allowing the take of Mourning Doves (Hunting Zones 3, 4, and 8). The daily bag and possession limits have been aggregated with the limits for Mourning Doves. Daily bag and possession limits for Mourning and Eurasian Collared-Doves remain at 5 and 15 birds, respectively.

Eurasian Collared-Doves (ECDOs) were introduced to North America in the 1970s and have rapidly colonized urban and rural areas across British Columbia. ECDOs have undergone a major range expansion in BC and the invasive species is now found across the southern half of the province and as far north as Dease Lake (BC Breeding Bird Atlas; E-Bird). In Canada, ECDOs are listed in the 1991 CWS Occasional Paper #1, "Birds Protected in Canada under the Migratory Birds Convention Act." At that time, they were footnoted as a species not known to occur in Canada. In BC, open seasons are available for two native Columbiformes – Band-tailed Pigeons and Mourning Doves. However, Rock Doves, another invasive species, are not protected under the MBCA. The province of British Columbia lists Rock Doves in Schedule C to the British Columbia Wildlife Act, which removes protection for species considered a nuisance and enables year-round public control. The province of British Columbia has repeatedly asked for tools to allow similar management programs for ECDOs.

Federal regulations treat species of Columbiformes differently. Native migratory doves and pigeons fall under the scope of the MBCA, but the invasive Rock Dove does not. The invasive ECDO is identified in the list of birds protected in Canada under the MBCA, which precludes its listing in BC's Schedule C and the use of control measures aimed at invasive species. The MBCA allows for the setting of hunting seasons, which is the only management tool currently available to help manage ECDOs. Eurasian Collared-Doves are fairly similar to Mourning Doves and the two species can easily be confused. Under the current regulations, Mourning Doves can be harvested but ECDOs cannot. Anyone harvesting an ECDO during a Mourning Dove season is committing an offence under the *Migratory Birds Regulations* and that person is subject to charges. The measure decriminalizes the take of the invasive species in areas where a Mourning Dove season is currently available and assists provincial programs aimed at controlling invasive species. The measure clarifies the provincial dove hunting regulations by having the same regulations and bag/possession limits for the two lookalike species. Because of the aggregate bag limit with Mourning Doves, the measure will not result in additional Mourning Dove harvest.

Yukon Territory

No regulatory changes have been made for the 2018/2019 and 2019/2020 hunting seasons.

Northwest Territories

No regulatory changes have been made for the 2018/2019 and 2019/2020 hunting seasons.

Nunavut

No regulatory changes have been made for the 2018/2019 and 2019/2020 hunting seasons.

Administrative amendments

The following administrative amendments have been made:

- Clarified the language of the *Migratory Birds Regulations* regarding the deposition of bait fourteen days prior to, and during, an open season for scientific (including baiting) and aviculture purposes
- Aligned French text with the English text, corrected grammar and wording

Status Update on Modernization of the *Migratory Birds Regulations*

Drafted in 1917, the *Migratory Birds Regulations* have never been comprehensively updated or revised. As such, ECCC is currently undertaking the process of amending the Regulations to update the language to modern standards, correct errors, restructure the Regulations for clarity, address enforcement issues, and clarify the provisions relating to the management of migratory bird hunting. The amendments also include references to Aboriginal Peoples of Canada (implementation of the Parksville Protocol to the Migratory Birds Convention between Canada and the United States).

Consultations on the proposed amendments with respect to references to Aboriginal people and the management of hunting were held in 2013 and 2014 respectively. Additional consultations, related to baiting for the purpose of hunting, were held in 2017. The comments received during these consultations have been carefully considered, and ECCC has been working with the Department of Justice to draft the new Regulations.

Please Report Bird Bands

The North American Bird Banding Program relies on hunters and other members of the public to report bird bands to its office. Reporting bird bands helps scientists and wildlife managers continue to learn about, manage and conserve bird populations.

Bird band encounters can be reported to the Canadian Bird Banding Office:

- online at www.reportband.gov,
- by email at ec.bbo.ec@canada.ca,
- by calling toll-free 1-800-327-BAND (2263), or
- by writing to:

Bird Banding Office
National Wildlife Research Centre
Canadian Wildlife Service, Environment and Climate Change Canada, Ottawa ON, K1A 0H3

After submitting your encounter reports online, you will promptly receive banding information, and have the option to print a certificate of appreciation.

Hunters can still expect to find various types of bands on game birds, including bands with or without the website or phone number. Hunters may report any bands and are encouraged to use the online reporting method.

Thank you for your cooperation.

The Government of Canada is Allowing the Temporary Possession of Dead Migratory Birds

The Government of Canada wants to inform the public of a variance to paragraph 6(*b*) of the *Migratory Birds Regulations*, to allow for the temporary possession of found dead migratory birds, which is in effect until August 25, 2018 (https://www.canada.ca/en/environment-climate-change/services/migratory-birds-legal-protection/public-notice-allowing-temporary-possession.html). ECCC intends to put in place a new variance extending the date for the temporary possession of found dead birds to August 2019.

As public participation in the study of dead migratory birds is necessary to help conduct surveys on avian viruses, it is permitted to temporarily possess found dead migratory birds to allow for swift delivery of such birds to provincial or territorial authorities for analysis. The Government of Canada is responsible, under the *Migratory Birds Convention Act, 1994*, to ensure that migratory birds are protected and conserved. Testing dead birds is believed to be the most effective method available for the detection of avian viruses. In all other circumstances, a prohibition against possessing the carcass of a migratory bird remains in effect.

What you need to do if you find a dead migratory bird:

- Call the Canadian Wildlife Health Cooperative (www.cwhc-rcsf.ca/) at 1-800-567-2033.
- Visit the Public Health Agency of Canada website (www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/influenza/fs-hwb-fr-mos-eng.php) for guidance on precautions to take when handling wild birds.

For more information on the *Migratory Birds Convention Act, 1994*, visit the Government of Canada's website (https://www.canada.ca/en/environment-climate-change/services/migratory-birds-legal-protection/convention-act-regulations.html).

New Online e-Permitting System – an Easy Way to Purchase the Migratory Game Bird Hunting Permit

In August 2014, ECCC launched a new online e-permitting ordering system to improve hunters' access to Migratory Game Bird Hunting (MGBH) permits. Originally, this system allowed hunters to purchase a permit online, and the permit (along with the Canadian Wildlife Habitat Conservation [CWHC] stamp) would then be mailed to the hunter within 3 to 5 business days. As of August 2015, hunters can purchase their MGBH permit and CWHC stamp online, receive electronic copies of the stamp and permit by email, and print these documents from the comfort of their own home. The e-permitting system is accessible to hunters 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

It should also be noted that the MGBH e-permitting purchasing system makes it easier for hunters to respond to the questions on the permit, which helps inform the National Harvest Survey. Data from this and other CWS surveys are used to assess the status of migratory game bird populations in Canada, their productivity, survival rates, and amount of harvest they can sustain. This information also provides data to inform hunting regulations and harvest management plans for future years.

Permits can be purchased online at http://www.permis-permits.ec.gc.ca/. Permits are also available for purchase at select Canada Post outlets and through some independent vendors.

Appendix: 2018/2019 Migratory Birds Hunting Regulations Summaries by Province and Territory (also available at: https://www.canada.ca/en/environment-climate-change/services/migratory-game-bird-hunting/regulations-provincial-territorial-summaries.html)

Additional information can be obtained at:

Environment and Climate Change Canada
Public Inquiries Centre
7th Floor, Fontaine Building
200 Sacré-Coeur Boulevard
Gatineau QC K1A 0H3
Telephone: 1-800-668-6767 (in Canada only) or 819-997-2800
Email: ec.enviroinfo.ec@canada.ca